DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR
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Honorable Craig Hosmer
House of Representatives
Washington, D. C. 20515

Dear Congressman Hosmer:

The Secretary has asked me to reply to your letter of October 6 requesting information as to the current status of preparations being made by the Department of State to claim compensation from the Government of Israel for injuries occurring as a result of the attack on the U.S.S. Liberty by Israeli air and naval units. Compensation will be claimed on behalf of the injured persons and the dependents of the deceased, as well as for losses incurred by the United State Government, such as for the damage done to the U.S.S. Liberty.

The United States has demanded compensation for the injuries suffered in the tragic attack on the U.S.S. Liberty and the Government of Israel has expressed its regrets over the incident and has promised to make payment. As a first step in preparing the claims, it was necessary to obtain sworn written statements from the dependents of the deceased and from the injured personnel. These statements will serve as the evidence in support of a claim on behalf of each claimant. Because of the large number of claims and the necessity of proceeding promptly with the determination of the amount of compensation to be paid, the Department arranged with the Department of Defense for lawyers assigned to the various Naval headquarters within the United States to take the forms prepared by the Department to the various claimants and to assist them in filling them out. Not only is this procedure quicker than the usual method of preparing international claims, which involves correspondence by mail between the claimant and the Department, but it has the additional advantage of ensuring that the claimants will have legal assistance in filling out the forms. A substantial number of the forms have already been completed and returned to us and we are now in the process of evaluating the evidence and preparing the claims. Within the next few weeks we expect to send

to send letters to the claimants in the thirty-four death cases. These letters will state the amount which we calculate international law permits us to claim on behalf of each of these persons and request the concurrence of the claimant to the amount before the claim is transmitted to the Government of Israel.

While some of the claims will accordingly be ready for presentation in the near future, others will, of course, require a longer period of time before they can be presented. For instance, in the case of personal injuries resulting in permanent impairment, it will not be possible to establish the degree of permanent impairment until all medical treatment has been concluded. Needless to say, these personal injury claims will be presented as soon as they are ready and the Government of Israel will be informed that additional claims will be forthcoming when the supporting medical evidence is available. Other claims will be presented when the evidence supporting them is available and they have been properly prepared for presentation.

If I can be of assistance on this or any other matter, please do not hesitate to let me know.

Sincerely yours,

William B. Macomber, Jr.
Assistant Secretary for
Congressional Relations

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L/C - Mr. Kerley
NEA/IAI - Mr. Lambrakis
H - Mr. Leahy

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